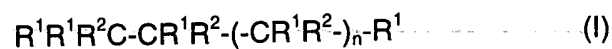


Kindly replace claims 1 and 8 by the following claims.

1. (amended) A composition for the pretreatment of fiber materials, said composition including at least the components A, B, C and D,

where component A is either a sulfonate of the formula (I)



where n is from 0 to 8, each R^1 is independently of the others hydrogen, an alkyl radical of 1 to 4 carbon atoms, an unsubstituted phenyl radical or a phenyl radical substituted by a radical of the formula $-SO_3^{\ominus}M^{\oplus}$, and each R^2 is independently of the others R^1 or a radical of the formula $-SO_3^{\ominus}M^{\oplus}$, subject to the proviso that component A contains at least one radical of the formula $-SO_3^{\ominus}M^{\oplus}$ and M is Na, K or NH_4 ,

or where component A is a polyhydric aliphatic alcohol of 2 to 12 carbon atoms,

component B is an ethoxylated alcohol of the formula (II) or a mixture of such alcohols



where r is from 1 to 8,

component C is an alkoxyate of the formula (III) or a mixture of such alkoxyates



where t is from 4 to 30, 20 to 80% of all the Z groups present are $-CH_2CH_2-O-$ and 80 to 20% of all the Z groups present are $-CHR^4-CHR^5-O-$, where in each case one of R^4 and R^5 is hydrogen and the other is CH_3 , R^3 in both component B and component C is a linear or branched alkyl radical of 4 to 20 carbon atoms and 50 to 100% of all the X's present are hydrogen and 0 to 50% of all the X's present are a methyl, ethyl or phenyl radical,

and component D is water.

8. (amended) A process for the pretreatment of fiber materials, which comprises treating the fiber materials with a composition according to claim 1.

STATUS OF THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-11 were pending in this application.

Claims 1-11 are objected to.

Claims 1-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stringer et al. (U.S. Patent 5,858,955).

Claims 1-3 and 6-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gosselink et al. (U.S. Patent 5,691,298) in view of Stringer et al. (U.S. Patent 5,858,955).

Claim 10 has been cancelled and claims 1 and 8 have been amended.

Claims 1-9 and 11 are presented for reconsideration.

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 8 have been amended by replacement. No other claims have been amended. No claims have been added.

Another version of the amended claims, showing the changes relative to the previous version, is appended. Additions are shown by underlining. Deletions are shown by strikethrough rather than bracketing since the claims may contain bracketing that is to remain. No new matter has been added.

Claims 1-11 are objected to, the examiner asserting that claim 1, line 13 is incoherent and lacks proper grammar. The undersigned acknowledges with appreciation a telephone conversation wherein the examiner explained that she objected to "any R¹ is independently of the others hydrogen ..." in claim 1, line 4. Responsive thereto applicants have amended their claims to recite, "each R¹ is,